



Memorial Service Brochure

The death of a loved one is a difficult experience. Know that everyone in the ministry and congregation at St. James shares your sadness and extends sincere condolences for your loss. It is our desire and privilege to minister to the families of our congregants in their time of need. While we grieve the loss of one who has been close, we do not sorrow as those who have no hope (1 Thessalonians 4: 13). It is through the Word of God that we have hope at the time of the death of a loved one (Romans 15: 4).

The Presbyterian Memorial Service

In the Presbyterian tradition, the memorial service is a worship service that proclaims victory over death through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is a time of spiritual renewal and hope—a time to hear, once again, God’s absolute assurance of our own eternal life. It is a time to sing the great hymns of faith, to hear the Word of God in scripture and preaching, and to share the story of faith of the individual whose life is being celebrated.

Although memorial services may be held in funeral homes or other locations, the ideal place for conducting a service upon the death of a Christian is at the church to which he or she belonged. By having the service at the church, all who attend will be reminded of our hope and assurance in Jesus Christ. Therefore, all members of St. James are encouraged to use the church building for memorial services.

Some families choose to host a graveside service, which coincides with the burial or interment. The Pastor is available to lead this service, as well. The graveside service can be a private family event, which is then followed by a public memorial service (on the same day or at a later date), or it can be a public event for all church members and friends, in lieu of a service in the sanctuary.

It is important for families to remember that the deceased was part of a church community, and that memorial services are an important ritual for the community. There are many people who will want to participate in celebrating and remembering the deceased. Attending a service helps us all remember God’s love, and that we are valued even after death.

Planning and Preparing for a Memorial Service

In preparation for a service at St. James, at your earliest opportunity you need to:

- 1. Call the church office and notify the Pastor or Office Manager of your loved one’s passing.**

The Pastor will talk with you and advise you on the steps for planning the service. The first step is to choose the type of service:

- Memorial service in the Sanctuary or other location
- Graveside service followed by memorial service
- Graveside service only

2. Choose your family's "point person"

In order to streamline communication, we ask that the family appoints one person to manage all communications with the church (Pastor, Office Manager, Service Coordinator).

3. Schedule the Service

In coordination with the Pastor and the Office Manager, schedule a time and place (if other than the sanctuary) for the service. Dates and times for memorial services should be based on the availability and preferences of the deceased's family, in conjunction with the Pastor's availability. All services will need to be planned around pre-scheduled church events.

While graveside services are normally done at the time of burial or internment, memorial services can be done at any time that is available.

Graveside services and times are normally coordinated between the grave site operator (ex. Forest Lawn) and the family of the deceased.

4. Schedule a time to meet with the pastor to discuss and plan the elements of the service.

This includes scripture readings, music, and people who will speak. You will also be assigned a Service Coordinator at this time.

5. Plan the reception.

As part of the ministry of St. James, the Deacons are available to provide cookies and coffee after the service in Fellowship Hall. If the family desires a larger reception with more food options, it is up to the family to find a preferred caterer and to work with the Service Coordinator about delivery and kitchen use.

6. Organize other items and decorations.

This can include:

- a picture of the deceased and a short obituary for the bulletin (to be emailed to the Office Manager)
- a large picture for the front of the sanctuary
- flowers, or other decorations for the sanctuary
- Slideshows, decorations, and pictures for the reception

General Outline of a Memorial Service in the Sanctuary

Prelude

Words of Welcome

Hymn [can be chosen by the family]

Opening Prayer

Scripture [can be chosen by the family]

Homily

Special Music [can be chosen by the family]

Words from Family and Friends

[2-4 people who have been preselected, who are willing to speak for 4-5 minutes maximum]
Hymn [can be chosen by the family]
Prayer of Thanksgiving and Lord's Prayer
Commendation
Postlude

General Outline for Graveside Service

Opening Scripture
Words of Welcome
Stories and Memories
[2-4 people who have been preselected, who are willing to speak for 4-5 minutes]
Committal
Prayers
Blessing

Fees for Sanctuary Service

Keyboardist (Organ/Piano): \$200 (plus \$50 if rehearsal with a soloist is needed)
Sound Personnel: \$150
Custodian: \$100
Service Coordinator: \$100
Facility Use, Bulletins: No Charge
Soloist fee (if soloist is desired): To be negotiated with soloist
A Pastor Honorarium is not required but always appreciated.

All fees should be paid to the individual recipient.

Policies and Traditional Practices

Officiant

Pastoral ethics require that St. James Pastor conduct all memorial services held at St. James. Any requests for another pastor or lay person to officiate or assist in the service must be approved by St. James' Pastor.

Structure of the Memorial Service

A memorial service held in the church is a service of worship, celebrating the deceased's life and the promise of eternal life through Jesus Christ. Consequently, all parts of the service are to be consistent with the present worship practices of the church. The family may suggest other items to be included in the service, with the approval of the Pastor.

Services for Non-members and Inactive Members

Conducting funerals for people who have no connection with the church is a normal part of the ministerial obligation. However, it is up to the discretion of the Pastor to decide if they or the Church Staff will participate.

Service Music

Only music appropriate to a worship service shall be used. All musical arrangements (pianist, soloist, *etc.*) must be approved by the Pastor and Church Staff. The use of congregational hymns is encouraged and may be selected with the pastor in consultation with the family during the service planning process.

The staff accompanist of St. James will ordinarily act as the musician for services. If they are not available, the music director will try to find an appropriate substitute.

Independent musician rate may vary from staff accompanist rate.

In cases where an outside organist/pianist or soloist is desired, permission must be secured from the Pastor.

Please note that the use of taped music or pre-recorded accompaniments is discouraged.

Video Presentation

We do not offer video presentations or slide shows during a Memorial Services, but they can be presented in the Sanctuary after a service or in Fellowship Hall during the reception. However, technology is limited, and families should consult with the Pastor and Sound Personnel about capabilities.

Decorations and Flower

It is customary, if desired, to have one large picture of the deceased sitting on an easel, in the front of the sanctuary, but not on the chancel (stage). Other pictures and collages may be shown at the reception. Any other decorations must be appropriate to a worship setting. No nails, tacks, staples, or screws shall be put in the walls or attached to the pews. All decorations must be removed within 3 hours of the conclusion of the service.

No furniture shall be removed from the church building.

Only fresh cut flowers and planters may be used in the Sanctuary.

Parking

St James has ample parking to accommodate even large services.

Memorials/Gifts

In certain circumstances, the family might request a contribution to the church or a charitable organization in lieu of flowers. The church will not manage, receive, or distribute designated funds for an outside institution. Undesignated funds and funds designated for an established project at St. James will be received by the church. Funds designated for a project or ministry not previously established will be designated for such only with approval of Session.